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Your ref:

Date: 26 May 2004

**BY FACSIMILE AND POST**

European Patent Office  
International Preliminary  
Examination Section  
D-80298  
Munich  
GERMANY

Dear Sirs.

**International Patent Application No GB03/00921**  
**Reckitt Benckiser N.V.**

This letter is in response to the Written Opinion dated 26 January 2004 to which a response is due by 26 May 2004.

Please delete current pages, 13, 14, 15 and 16 in favour of replacement pages 13, 14 and 15. For the convenience of the Examiner a manuscript amended version of former pages 13 to 16 is also enclosed.

**Lack of Unity**

In the Written Opinion the Examiner raised an objection on the ground of lack of unity and also raised objections against each of the allegedly separate inventions.

New claim 1 is based upon a combination of previous claim 1 and previous claims 12 and 13. With this amendment it is submitted that the objection of lack of unity, as well as the patentability objections raised against the separate inventions is addressed.

Yours faithfully  
RECKITT BENCKISER plc

Craig M Bowers

Encls

[h:/patent/shared/cmb/crspndncl/10976P4.WO](file:///h:/patent/shared/cmb/crspndncl/10976P4.WO)

5.

Claims

1. Device for receiving and holding a plurality of unit doses of a detergent composition and for individually dispensing the unit doses into an automatic dishwashing machine over a plurality of washing cycles, wherein the device comprises  
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(i) a housing adapted to receive the plurality of unit doses, each separately contained in a compartment of a plate, the unit doses being arranged along the circumference thereof;

15 (ii) means for opening a compartment or for ejecting a unit dose therefrom; and

20 (iii) means to allow access of wash liquor to the unit dose contained in the opened compartment or ejected therefrom, within a controlled time period to allow dissolution of the unit dose into wash liquor of the machine.

2. Device according to claim 1, wherein a holding pocket is provided to receive and hold the unit dose when ejected from the compartment, and means to control the access of wash liquor to said holding pocket.  
25

3. Device according to claim 1, wherein the access of wash liquor to the unit dose (2;2'), when retained in

- 3 the opened compartment, is via a passageway, the device having means to controllably open and close the passageway.
4. Device according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the holding pocket or passageway is provided with a hinged or  
10 sliding door.
5. Device according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the access of wash liquor to the unit dose retained in the opened compartment or ejected therefrom is controlled by means reactive to a  
15 condition reached during the washing cycle of the machine.
6. Device according to claim 5, wherein the access of wash liquor to the unit dose retained in the opened compartment or ejected therefrom is controlled by means reactive to the temperature of the wash liquor.  
20
7. Device according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the access of wash liquor to the unit dose retained in the opened compartment or ejected therefrom is time controlled.
- 25 8. Device according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the means for ejecting the unit dose from the compartment comprises an ejector acting on a face of the compartment.

- 5 9. Device according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein the means for opening the compartment comprises a piercing or cutting means to penetrate a wall of the compartment.
- 10 10. Device according to any of the preceding claims, being adapted to be a portable, preferably self-standing, device.
11. Device according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the unit dose is a detergent or detergent additive tablet.
- 15 12. Blister pack according to any of claims 1 to 10, wherein the unit dose is a detergent or detergent additive gel.

Claims

1. Device for receiving and holding a plurality of unit doses of a detergent composition and/or additive and for individually dispensing ~~said~~ <sup>the</sup> unit doses into an automatic dishwashing machine over a plurality of washing cycles, wherein the device comprises
  - (i) a housing ~~(10, 10')~~ adapted to receive said plurality of unit doses, ~~(2, 2')~~ each separately contained in a package or compartment thereof ~~(4, 5, 4, 5')~~, of a plate, the unit doses being arranged along the circumference thereof;
  - (ii) means ~~(19, 19')~~ for opening said package or compartment ~~(4, 5, 4, 5')~~ or for at least partly ejecting said unit dose ~~(2, 2')~~ therefrom; and
  - (iii) means ~~(21, 21')~~ to allow access of water or wash liquor to <sup>the</sup> ~~said~~ unit dose ~~(2, 2')~~ contained in the opened package or compartment ~~(4, 5, 4, 5')~~ or ejected therefrom, within a controlled time period after opening thereof to allow dissolution of the unit dose into ~~the water or~~ wash liquor of the machine.
2. Device according to claim 1, wherein a holding pocket ~~(20, 20')~~ is provided to receive and hold <sup>the</sup> ~~said~~ unit dose ~~(2, 2')~~, <sup>when</sup> ejected from the package or compartment ~~(4, 5, 4, 5')~~, and means ~~(21, 21')~~ to

5      controlled ~~body~~ open and close the access of water or  
wash liquor to said holding pocket.

3. Device according to claim 1, wherein the access of  
water or wash liquor to said unit dose (2; 2'), ~~in which~~  
10      contained in the opened package or compartment (4, 5,  
                <sup>the</sup>  
                ~~4, 5'~~) is accomplished by a passageway between the  
interior of the machine and the opened package or  
compartment, said device having means to controllably  
open and close ~~the~~ passageway.
4. Device according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the holding  
15      pocket or passageway is provided with a hinged or  
sliding door (21, 21').
5. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
wherein the access of water or wash liquor to said  
20      unit dose (2, 2') contained in the opened package or  
compartment (4, 5, 4, 5') or ejected therefrom is  
controlled by means reactive to a condition reached  
during the washing cycle of the machine.
6. Device according to claim 5, wherein the access of  
water or wash liquor to said unit dose (2, 2')  
25      contained in the opened package or compartment (4, 5,  
                <sup>the</sup>  
                ~~4, 5'~~) or ejected therefrom is controlled by means  
(27, 27') reactive to the ~~specific~~ temperature of the  
wash liquor.

- 5 7. Device according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the  
access of water or wash liquor to said unit dose ~~(2,~~  
~~24)~~ contained in the opened package or compartment ~~(4,~~  
~~5, 41, 51)~~ or ejected therefrom is time controlled.
- 10 8. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
wherein ~~said~~ means for ejecting the unit dose ~~(2, 21)~~  
from ~~said~~ package or compartment ~~(4, 5, 41, 51)~~ comprises an ejector ~~(19, 191)~~ to act on ~~at~~ least one  
face of ~~said~~ package or compartment.
- 15 9. Device according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein ~~said~~  
~~means for opening~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~said~~ package or compartment ~~(4, 5,~~  
~~41, 51)~~ comprises a piercing or cutting means to  
penetrate <sup>a wall</sup> at least one of the package or compartment  
walls.
- 20 10. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
wherein ~~said~~ housing ~~(10; 10')~~ is adapted to receive a  
blister pack ~~(1, 1')~~ comprising said plurality of unit  
doses ~~(2, 21)~~.
- 25 11. Device according to any of the preceding claims,  
being adapted to be a portable, preferably self-  
standing, device.
12. Blister pack for use with a device according to any  
of the preceding claims.

- 5 13. Blister pack according to claim 12, being in the  
form of a wheel-like plate (3; 3') with the unit doses  
(2; 2') arranged in at least one circle along the  
circumference thereof.
14. Blister pack according to claim 12, being in the  
10 form of a row of unit doses (2; 2') arranged in a  
flexible loop.
- 11 Device the preceding
15. 1 Blister pack according to any of claims 12 to 14,  
wherein the unit dose is a detergent or detergent  
additive tablet.
16. Blister pack according to any of claims 1~~2~~ to 1~~2~~,  
10 wherein the unit dose is a detergent or detergent  
additive gel.